2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

222 the islands. Today the leaves of the cultivated sweet potato are also eaten. The stems, with the leaves adhering, are broken from the plants and placed in baskets which are strapped to the back in the same way as bundles of wood (p. 151).

Fruits, especially those eaten raw, are usually gathered by boys, but the *ndawa*, the Tahitian chestnut (*ivi*), and the *vala* are gathered under the supervision of grown men. On all the islands the Tahitian chestnut and *vala* are gathered and esteemed highly. In harvesting the *vala*, care is taken not to [481] harm the trees. Boys climb the tree and push or twist off the fruit clusters with a straight or a forked stick. The men gather them from the ground and boys or men carry them home in baskets on a stick resting on the shoulder. [482] Usually two baskets are carried on one stick, one behind, the other in front of the shoulder. The lower branches of the Tahitian chestnut tree are picked by hand. The upper branches are picked from the ground with a stick, or a boy climbs the tree to shake the branches and loosen the nuts with a stick.

222 Other fruits gathered from the bush are: *yaka* (*Pueraria thunbergiana*),
262 *yaumitha (Malaisia scandens)*, *yangai*, *tarai*, important especially on Fulanga; *songa* (the fruit of the mangrove) eaten on Fulanga and Ongea, *mbau levu*, *mbau thana*, preferred to the larger *mbau levu* because of its sweetness, *mbawaki*, and *nggalaka*.

[261] Arrowroot (*yambia*, *Tacca pinnatifida*), the tuber of which was formerly the staple on the volcanic islands, is eaten only in years of drought, except on Fulanga and Ongea, where it is eaten often. The arrowroot does not grow on Kambara.

[261] The *wangiri* nut, formerly the staple on the limestone islands and Kambara, is eaten occasionally on Fulanga and Ongea, but elsewhere only in times of famine. It does not grow on the volcanic islands.

● [263] Sugar, extracted from wild ti root, is used to sweeten puddings.

Yavato, an edible grub (the larva of the long-horned prionid beetle, *Olethrius*) found in decaying trees, is highly prized. Men search for grubs in old tree trunks lying in the bush. On Kambara I watched a European-Fijian half-caste searching for grubs. The saliva ran from his mouth when he found an old trunk with many holes eaten into the wood. Roughly he cleaned off the dust of decaying, moulding wood with his hands and hastily ate 46 grubs.

The coconut crab (*unga vule*) is considered a great delicacy. The crab, which weighs up to 12 pounds, is caught by men who turn it on its back and [482] tie vines around it so that the legs are lashed to the body. A stick is pushed under the vine and the crab is slung on the shoulder.

Birds' eggs are never gathered or eaten, but turtles' eggs, found on the beach, are relished.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

Roasting

Roasting is a quick method of preparing food. Breadfruit is often placed whole, stem down, directly on the coals or placed on sticks across the oven pit above a fire in which stones are heated. After roasting, the skin of the breadfruit is quickly removed with a small, sharp stick. The breadfruit is ready to be eaten or be made into pudding. Wild yams and bush fruits are often roasted over an open fire in the bush. After roasting they are scraped, dipped in salt water, and eaten.

Boiling in Pots

Food was formerly boiled in earthenware pots (*kuro*), but now large imported iron pots are used. The fire is laid at one end of the kitchen and the pots are placed upon two iron rods above it. It is fanned with a pandanus-leaf fan (*iri*). The pots are covered with dry breadfruit leaves, which fall from the trees in the village and are gathered when needed.

Sweet potato and non-poisonous manioc are usually boiled in fresh water, but most of the boiling is done in coconut cream (*lolo*). Coconut cream is made as follows:

Ripe nuts are husked by ripping the husk open at the stem end of the nut on the upturned pointed end of a husking stake (*ndoko*). The strip of husk, which has been freed, is pulled off by hand. The process is repeated until the husk has been removed. The nut is then halved by one blow from a cane knife and the flesh is grated on the tooth edged, upturned end of a piece of iron attached to a board. A person sits on the board astride the rod and grates into a wooden bowl. (Usually little girls do the grating for the kitchens.) Coconut milk is added to the gratings and the mixture is strained with a hibiscus strainer.

Salt is not manufactured in Lau. According to Tchosaia of Tokalau, formerly salt water was sometimes used for boiling. Today it is little used in pots although food is occasionally soaked or dipped in salt water before being eaten.

Mboro, the daily boiled dish, is made of greens and coconut cream with or without fish. Leaves of the cabbage, the sweet potato, *mboroa sovivi* (*Ipomea gracilis*), *mbele*, pumpkin, or manioc are picked from the stems. They are placed in the pot with coconut cream and some of the coconut gratings from which the liquid has been extracted for coconut cream. Fish or shellfish, if available, are added to the greens and coconut cream, and the pot is covered with a slightly dry breadfruit leaf and boiled slowly for about two hours.

Fish or shellfish are cleaned on the beach, but scales are not removed from the fish.

Soups are popular but are not made every day. A delicious fish soup called